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than that. On the 2d of February, 1867, one of the males was twittering about the orchard where we then lived, at East Falmouth, on the shore of Vineyard Sound. A few days after I received a letter from a friend at Sandwich, stating that he saw several of them *during the last week of January*. As he did not give me the day of the month, I cannot give it, but of my date, the 2d of February, I am positive, as I took a note of it at the time. As Sandwich is fifteen miles to the north of East Falmouth, the fact of their being seen there the soonest is quite interesting. In 1866, they appeared March 4th at East Falmouth, and in 1868, not until March 11th. In 1867 we had very severe weather after their early appearance, but they remained.—W. C. FISH.

A VIVIPAROUS ECHINODERM.—Dr. Edward Grube describes an Echinoid from the Chinese seas, under the name of *Anochanus*, which actually produces young Echini, like itself, having spines, feet, and even pedicellariæ. This discovery is of remarkable interest, for it adds one more to the many diverse methods of reproduction known among Echinoderms, and completes the parallel which they present to the worms. We now know, in both groups, of animals laying eggs which produce embryos developing directly into the adult form; of others which present strange larval conditions which either become completely altered, so as to form the adults, or bud off from their interiors a small mass of living tissue which becomes the adult, leaving the larva to perish. We know, in both groups, of hermaphrodites and of dioecious species, and now we have added a viviparous form of Echinoderm, such as was previously observed in some Nemertian worms. We have yet to discover among the Echinoderms the various modifications of asexual reproduction, by pseudova, fission, or true parthenogenesis; the first two of which methods (especially fission) are so well known among worms.—*Quarterly Journal of Science, London*.

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## PROCEEDINGS OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE, LETTERS AND ART. On the evening of Dec. 29, 1868, a large number of the members of the National Institute, as well as those interested in the work, met in New York City to organize two of the Academies, *i. e.*, that of the Natural Sciences, and that of the Mathematical and Physical Sciences, into which the Institute is divided. We should mention that after several preliminary meetings, a Constitution was drafted, and on May 29th a copy of it, with the following circular, was sent to the leading scholars of the country:

“The lack of any means of easy intercourse and free communication, and consequently of united effort and mutual support, has been felt for some time past by men of letters, artists, and scientific men in the United States. They constantly find themselves reminded of this lack by their weakness as a class, because although a class

they are not a body with a recognized organization. Scattered over a wide expanse of country, they are, from this dispersion and this want, no less morally than physically isolated. There is no authority other than the temporary and shifting, although in some respects valuable one, of public opinion, by which their claims may be passed upon—no tribunal of their peers or of those of their own class to whose experience and judgment they would willingly defer—no representative council, the stamp of whose approval would be acknowledged by the public as well as by themselves. From the lack of such a centre of union, of communication, and of combined action, they, and with them the cause of truth and knowledge, and the public welfare, suffer. In the hope, therefore, of compassing these objects, we propose to establish a National Institute of Letters, Art and Science, upon a plan outlined in a Constitution accompanying this Circular. We ask your coöperation."

After several meetings a Constitution was finally adopted founded on that of the French Institute, but adapted to the genius of our country. Under this Constitution several Academies have been or will be organized, and their meetings will be held in New York City. The following officers of the Academy of Natural Sciences were elected: For President, JOSEPH LEIDY, M. D.; for Vice President, JOHN S. NEWBERRY, M. D.; for Secretary, CHARLES A. JOY, Ph. D.; for Treasurer, J. CARSON BREVOORT, M. A. For members of the Council, JEFFRIES WYMAN, M. D., and SPENCER F. BAIRD.

If, as it promises to do, the National Institute will bind together and thus efficiently guide and control the army of workers in letters, science and art, a new era has dawned for the development of knowledge and its practical results in America. The National Institute certainly embraces the best talent and learning in the land; it only needs in addition, as has been remarked, an endowment of at least a million of dollars with which to begin its operations. At the outset it should place its officers on salaries, that their time may be devoted entirely to its service; should aid inquirers in making researches; should have the means of publishing its transactions and proceedings on a scale worthy of its liberal organization; and as its local habitation is in the city of New York, to the monied men of that great and wealthy city must it look for the moral and pecuniary support necessary for its life and final success. Such a National Institute in no way conflicts with the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which is a peripatetic body, meeting from place to place in the summer holidays, and we know of no other organization which would so fully meet the wants of the people.



### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. F. A., Salem.—The presence of plants in sleeping rooms, is a thing to be avoided for several reasons. First, the leaves of growing plants, during the hours of daylight, constantly absorb a large amount of carbonic acid from the air; and this, by the action of the light, is decomposed; and the carbon goes to feed the plant, while the oxygen is exhaled. When light is withdrawn, this process stops, and any carbonic acid remaining undecomposed within the leaf-tissues is liable to escape again; thus to some extent, vitiating the atmosphere. This is not a great matter however, and indeed plants in *leaf only* are not chargeable with much of this kind of mischief. But plants in flower exhale carbonic acid freely at all times; for in all the processes connected with fertilization and fruiting, the starch and sugar found before in the tissues are being taken up and decomposed, part going to furnish the new products deposited in the seed, and part suffering complete reversion to its old form, first into acetic acid, and then into the